

UC-NRLF



B 4 699 848

IN ITINERE
POEMS BY ♪ ♪ ♪
GEORGE NORTON
NORTHROP ♪ ♪

H. Moise

Howard Moise

from G. N. N.

Camp Dodge, Iowa.

June 1918.

IN ITINERE

IN ITINERE

POEMS

BY

GEORGE NORTON NORTHROP

MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

Oxford :

B. H. BLACKWELL, 50 & 51 BROAD STREET

London :

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co., LIMITED

MCMIX

DEDICATED
TO
MY MOTHER-AUNTS

PS
3527
0588
IS
1909

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ART	9
THE WESTWIND	10
AUTUMN AND SPRING	11
RETURNED	12
IN CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. IN MEMORIAM J.M.	13
WALTER PATER AT BRASENOSE	14
IN MEMORIAM A.T.	15
SONNETS OF BROTHERHOOD:—	
I. TO R.F. IM T.	19
II. TO J.C.M.	20
III. TO D.E.L.	21
IV. THE STRANGER	22
V. ILLUSIONS	23
VI. MONTAIGNE AND LA BOETIE	24
VII. SEPARATION	25
VIII. MAGDALEN	26
IX. TO R.L.L.	27
X. PAST FINDING OUT	28
XI. FREEDOM	29
XII. ENRICHMENT	30
THE LOOM	31
DISBURDENED	32
MAGDALEN	33

	PAGE
TO L. P. S. AT IFFLEY	34
ADDISON'S WALK	35
THE FOUR FATES	36
FOR EVER	37
DUCKS	38
TO MONTAIGNE	39
ON READING ONE OF OSCAR WILDE'S PLAYS IN HIS ROOMS, MAGDALEN COLLEGE	40
THE QUARRY	41
THE CONQUEST	42
ETERNAL MYSTERIES	43
THE DREAMER	44
MONTMARTRE	45
THE TUILERIES	46
MAISON LAVENUE. MOODS:—	
I. ALONE	47
II. THE ORCHESTRA	48
BOULEVARD ST. MICHEL	49
EN ROUTE	50
LIFE'S SOLACE	51
THE SKULL	52
MR. AND MRS. BETTERTON	54
A SONG OF YOUTH	55
A WANDERER'S SONG	56
MY HEARTH	57
A GAME	58
THE OPTIMIST	59
DE AMICITIA	60
SIC TRANSIT	61

Contents.

vii

	PAGE
A SONG OF THE WEST	62
PLAGUE-STRICKEN	63
THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE	64
THE QUEST	65
EXPATRIATION	66
ON OCCUPYING A STRANGER'S ROOMS IN THE LONG VACATION	68
ON A CLANDESTINE INSCRIPTION IN ANOTHER'S BOOK. TO THE VICTIM	69
TO MY SISTER	70
THE WORSHIPPER	71
APART	72
IN MEMORIAM P. B. S.	73
COMMODIOUS SEAS	83
DELIVERANCE	84
NIGHT	85
MASKED	86
THE WISEMEN	87
LIFE AND LOVE	88
SHADOWS	89
AD MATREM	91
STARS	92
TO ALAN STEVENSON	93
TRAVELLER'S SONG	94

Ten of the sonnets in this book have appeared in 'The Oxford Magazine': two of them were reprinted in Mr. J. B. Firth's 'The Minstrelsy of Isis.' Other poems have been published in 'The Christ's College Magazine' and elsewhere. The Author begs to thank the Editors of these papers for their kindness in permitting him to include these verses here.

IN ITINERE.

ART.

A LITTLE bird flew out of the East,
With strong men running after :
 The bird unseen,
 A cloud between,
They heard her mocking laughter.

The magic song has never ceased
Nor the cloud been rent asunder ;
 But the voice is clear
 To those who hear,
In sunshine or 'mid thunder.

THE WESTWIND.

THE fingers of the westwind touch my brow,
And thou art near :
Fragile hands that soothe and calm,
Full of healing and of balm
For ancient hurt and fear.

The breakers that leap angry at the prow
Turn silver-bright,
Laughing low : grey mists afar
(Iris mantles of a star),
Do glimmer on my sight.

AUTUMN AND SPRING.

THE leaves are dropping like lost hopes that fall
Before the wind of errant memory :
Amid forgotten hosts they idly lie,
An outworn drift of dreams fantastical.
There may they linger ; let no vain recall
Of fancy rouse them in false charity
To tottering life and semblances that try
To thwart a long ordained funeral.

Bewail not, friend, their multitudinous birth,
Nor yet the swift approaching burial-day.
So let them lie, and from their slow decay
May mount the vision for a fairer earth
Than fresh-eyed youth e'er dreamed in halcyon mood
When wandering through th' Arcadian solitude.

RETURNED.

THE morning veil is drawn, and England grey
And silver-misted gleams across the sea :
The rose-befriended wind blows hauntingly
Across the garden-slopes that front the bay.
One virgin sail speeds on her sapphire way,
Fleet courier from the Mother-isle to thee,
Her bridal daughter, wrapt in melody
Amid the lucent gardens of the spray.

No stranger thou nor she. Thy greetings fall
Upon mine ears like old hearth-songs of home :
Illumined hours of that beleaguered reign
Of Charles, my fathers' King, in silence call
With every breath blown from the echoing foam ;
I hear them call ; I stand at home again.

Isle of Wight.

IN CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

IN MEMORIAM J.M.

FULL many a year has died since here you trod
In youth these tranquil courts that close befriend
High dreams and sweet imaginings that lend
Clear dews of bright remembrance to this sod.
The years are dead ; but you, like Hermes shod,
Still pace the gardens where yet fruitful bend
The branches of yon tree the gardeners tend
With careful hands and many a propping rod.

And we, who now inhabit these dim years
Your soul prophetic looked upon, turn back
To walk the calm quadrangle by your side :
Teach us, fair boy, to fill our modern lack
With such devotion as shall hide our fears
And send us on our journey fortified.

WALTER PATER AT BRASENOSE.

HIGH on the forehead of the reverend wall,
Irradiant as some glorious, antique name
That shines from laboured parchment like a flame
The ivy clings, the years' memorial.
Beneath, where guarded cloisters silent call
To votive tasks, unmeant for noisy fame,
Far from the unsought voice of men's acclaim
Calm Pater toiled with vision mystical.

Upon the missal of high thoughts he wrought,
And strove to clothe them in the tenderest grace;
Illumination fair he ever sought
With perfect chastity of art to trace;
And bending o'er his careful page he slept,
Smiling at Fancy, while she, grieving, wept.

IN MEMORIAM A.T.

ENWRAPT in mist and touched with silver rain
The morning loiters on her threshold fair
And looks across the world ; then climbs this stair
That mounts precipitate above the plain.

Below the crags the inextinguishable sea
Of tidal waters wandering on their way ;
And on the wind, blown far across the bay,
The cries of gulls complaining dolorously.

He comes no more who loved to linger here
Upon this upland down above the sea ;
He comes no more with tender minstrelsy
To vow remembrance to an absent ear.

His hand has vanished from our wavering sight,
No more we see him on the headland hill ;
And yet, his vibrant voice is with us still :
He sings for ever on this beacon height.

*At Sunrise,
Highdown,
Isle of Wight.*

SONNETS OF BROTHERHOOD

I.

WE mingle, then pass on, and meet again,
Like grains within the glass. The tireless Hand
That grips this constant monitor is manned
By power inscrutable to render vain
The transient surmise of an eager brain.
Our dreams are flouted by the voiceless band
Of hurrying moments : sore bereft we stand,
Like mourning Niobe among her slain.

Is there no recompense for faded hope,
For aching years and dim uncertainty?
Aye, brother ! through the shadows we must grope,
Warm hand in hand in close fraternity.
The race we run has no reward to bring
Like this : we must be staunch, unfaltering.

II.

Is comradeship a transient circumstance
To rout the tedium of an irksome hour?
Has close companionship none other dower
Than words that spell an empty dalliance?
The murmuring years cast reminiscent glance
At fragrant friendships age will ne'er deflower,
Heart-fed by inextinguishable power,
Our generation's warm inheritance.

The cross-roads gleam at hand; but must we part,
Each on his path to mount and disappear
While darkness builds his barriers, and the heart
Is chilled by killing damps of gloom and fear?
There is no course of promise for my soul
That does not find you waiting at the goal.

III.

BROTHER, our paths are dim upon the hills
That bound our wavering ken : the radiant morn
Lighting us here is mocked by cloud-rack, torn
And riven in Titan brawl of unchecked wills :
Eke by that wandering wind, Despair, who chills
The traveller-thought, grown sombre gray and worn
Long ere his time. And all of hope and scorn
That lies beyond must wait what age fulfils.

But what avail these dreaded sights beyond ;
Beyond the strivings of all subtleness ?
Turn hence your gaze and plight a lasting bond,—
Where inner eye meets inner eye to bless
And sanctify communion with a vow
That knows no Future, knows no Then, no Now.

IV.

I KNOW a world of men, and yet not one :
A crowd of faces that stand out to sight
Against the glimmering sky of argent night ;
Dim heads that nod, far eyes that greet ; but none
I know : all strange as some new dream begun
And never ended : no acquaintance light
Of all this throng, no shy, indifferent wight
So alien to me as that self with whom I run.

Oh, let us seek the hush of some still place
Where we may learn to find each other out ;
To scan each other's act, to note each grace,
And when we meet a fault yet ne'er to doubt.
There we may forge the charmed links that bind
The soul unto the adamantine mind.

V.

VAIN are the joys of youth and young desire
Crowding upon the circuit of these days
When comrade Hope goes springing o'er the ways
That lead where Fancy strums her careless lyre;
Vain are these hours and bootless all the fire
Of ardent minds, and all the winnowed praise
Of precept-giver, and academic bays
If in thy heart there sing no soothing choir.

We read our dials and put on man's estate
And think us masters of the fleeting years;
We hedge our lives with fact, and bar the gate
'Gainst supplicating Love that begs in tears:
And when at last we call with ebbing breath,
Alas! none answers: all are dead, save Death!

VI.

MONTAIGNE AND LA BOÉTIE.

'MID mellow lands and patrimonial store,
Contentment placed no soothing hand in thine :
When argosies of wit and song divine
Touched keel upon thy hospitable shore
Enforcèd joy was thine to count them o'er.
Last came a Friend, and at your mutual shrine
Were poured rich offerings of priceless wine,
Rare vintages, which vines immortal bore.

Then smiled in warmth the sun of Gascony
Upon thy generous fields, oh artless sage !
And summer fed thy famished heart with cheer :
Thy wearied ears were filled with harmony,
And in the garden of thy thoughts the year
Brought forth in joy perennial heritage.

VII.

AMID the hurrying world of that great town
We drove, and London's tumult passed us by
Unheeded, while an inward melody
Sang on. As in some garden of renown
The voice of other years finds power to drown
What is not pure and calm, so peace was nigh
And held us mute; while eye sought trusting eye,
And seeking found, nor drooped in sadness down.

We parted, and the world rushed in between;
The grey, dividing sea, our restless shore:
Yet does the blessing stay and evermore
Make day inviolate, though changed the scene.
Safe from the bruising hand of Time, the flower
Fades not that bloomed in that undying hour.

Madison.

VIII.

MAGDALEN.

THE brooding night rests on these fields of peace ;
Soft by the wooded paths the waters shine,
Loth to pass on in murmurous release :
The mists of evening find no lovelier shrine
To wreathe with floating folds in priestly spell :
Where o'er the cloistered walls the moon appears,
Unwearied stands the sweet-tongued sentinel,
Fair friend of time, companion of the years.

Here we have sped the day, and dreamed the night ;
Our comrade hopes have paced these paths in joy
And put to rout oncoming time and space
That yawn precipitate before our sight.
Ah, friend ! our love need fear no base alloy
While walls grown hoar like these put on new grace.

IX.

COME with me once again across the fields
And watch the golden moon rise o'er the veil
That wraps Port Meadow's length with argent pale.
Look, where the town we left, mist-shadowed, yields
Lights that the gnomish willow dimly shields.
Come, link your arm in mine and take the trail
Beside the river we were wont to sail
In laughter-loving days among the fields.

We 'll leave the pathway where the highroad turns
Across the bridge, beside the ivied wall :
We 'll mount to yonder hamlet where there burns
Under some dark-thatched roof a welcoming fire.
Before that ancient hearth no words shall fall :
The silence there shall speak our hearts' desire.

X.

FOR thee I would abandon all the past ;
The wistful eyes of those who hold me dear,
The sons of morning and the ways of cheer,
The hope of wife and child and peace at last
Beside a glowing altar-hearth. Thou hast
No sorrow hidden that my heart can fear :
If only, brother, thou wilt feel me near
My life is thine, my lot with thee is cast.

I know not why my soul is wrapt in thine,
Or why mine eye finds solace in thy gaze :
I leave it to that fathomless design
That here hath blessed us in its secret maze.
I find no dread in the declining sun :
Since thou hast come, I count my life begun.

XI.

THE bridled world hath run no single course,
Obedient about the mastering sun,
Since here I felt compelling law begun,
To which my soul must render up her force.
And yet, what constant star can mete the source?
No time is old enough : no glass had run
When first that love was born which thou hast won
And I have given to thee with no remorse.

Without beginning, e'en without an end
The orbit of our souls must ever bend :
Eternal rule makes free, it does not bind
I have surrendered all I am to thee,
And in that full capitulation find
Only the vibrant throb of liberty.

XII.

UPBRAID me not because my heart is bold !
I grant no favour when I give to thee
All that I am and all I mean to be.
True sacrifice I 'd bear did I withhold
What leaves me richer when I give than gold
Could make, or fame, or banner'd ships at sea.
I am too weak : I cannot set me free
From what remunerates with joy untold.

My father, thou ; with reverence imbued
I bring thee love and honour from pure streams.
Thou art my brother, trusted comrade, whole
Companion of my inmost certitude.
Thou art my son, dear end of all my dreams ;
To thee I have bequeathed my secret soul.

THE LOOM.

As chaste Penelope her web designed
With colours from her changing thought's content;
Threads dull and sombre when her hope was spent;
A glowing texture when the fitful wind
Bore o'er the far-scanned sea a sail that shined
Starlike above the suitors' merriment;
In nightly secrecy impenitent
Unravelled all her groping hands could find:

So do I weave and mingle in the woof
Crimson and gold, umber and ashen gray,
The variant colours of the passing day;
Nor heed that self, mysterious, aloof,
Who nightly creeps into the silent gloom
And swift despoils the raiment of my loom.

DISBURDENED.

PERCHANCE I feel the burden of despair
Outweigh the zest and consequence of life,
My pondered projects lost amid the strife
Of warring yet invulnerable care !
Perchance my wavering soul has lost her share
Of fortitude before the wounding knife
Of calumny, and all things passion-rife
That rise up mocking in the thoroughfare !

Thus torn by sore dismay I look with ill
And jealous eye upon the world without :
When straight my heart finds overflowing fill
Of shame tumultuous : on all sides round about
I see men smiling under loads more hard
Than those wherewith my stricken soul is scarred.

MAGDALEN.

RECEIVE our blessing, Waynflete : we have thine
In this grey, sculptured home. Here, Learning's guest
And thine, we may pursue our tireless quest
With benison bestowed from this thy shrine.
About the courtyards of our proud confine
Throng shades of kindred souls, thy sons confest :
Sage Grocyn, Hampden hale, and Colet blest
With vision clear, and Wolsey royal fine.

Well have I left the ranks that march in vain
And countermarch in ever-echoing tread
Of countless steps upon a dusty plain
Where Hope halts wearily and Youth lies dead,
Content to feel thy cloistering walls my state,
Happy therein to meet oncoming fate.

To L. P. S. AT IFFLEY.

ACROSS these leagues of undulating gray
My heart finds haven in the antique town
Whose open volume and whose triple crown
With lingering step I left but yesterday.
And once again I seek the meadowed way
Along the languorous stream that loiters down
To thine untroubled garden, in her gown
Of woven green and intermingled spray.

Well hast thou chosen, from our grim unrest
To steal away and woo a spot so fair
As this, unwitting of the voice of care.
Long may yon tower by drowsy centuries blest
On thee a benediction sure bestow
There where melodious waters ever flow.

Concord N. H.

ADDISON'S WALK.

THE gates are closed to all save Twilight dim,
Who walks with silent feet, a passing dream,
Enwrapt in some pale visionary gleam
And chanting low her inarticulate hymn.

Faint fragments of forgotten gold yon bough
Gives to the breeze, and he gives to the stream
Where silently two sable guardians seem
To float like spirits on a midnight prow.

Here man has made a path apart from men
Where with the past we may communion learn,
And seek the vision that has fled our ken.
When from laborious years of strife and pain
We would retreat and rest, here we may turn
To walk with our untroubled selves again.

Magdalen.

THE FOUR FATES.

FOUR fates there are who sit in judgment grim
Upon each life : who spin and draw the thread
And part it from the distaff's copious head :
In everlasting task and conference dim
They wind the circling years and, tireless, trim
The skeins of circumstance that daily wed
Youth and the grave, the living and the dead ;
Chanting the while in turn an age-long hymn.

Pale Clotho and young Lachesis are here,
And that bent sister of paternal Time,
Old Atropos, whose son is grisly Fear ;
But o'er these three with governance sublime
Bends a stern Form with eyes dispensing awe :
He rules ; they bow obedience to his law.

FOR EVER.

THEY prate of that eternity that glows
Beyond the shadowed barriers we spend
Our powers to mount : they tax their hours to rend
The veil, whose pattern dark with secret woes
Embroids our days and vanquishes repose.
They tell us that this dusty journey's end
Will bring unending peace and rest to mend
The bruised members from terrestrial blows.

Believe them not ! The hour at hand must reap
In joy her own reward. To-day is part
Of all eternity : the soundless deep
Lies under, not beyond. The valiant heart
Need seek no kingdom o'er the unmapped sea,
Discovering here and now his sovereignty.

DUCKS.

THE autumn days have come : high overhead
The ducks are winging in long files of white
That swing far out in so much glimmering light
As yet remains before the day is fled.
Silent, as I who watch them, are they led
Far southward, faithful in unerring flight.
Here as I stand, a feather gleaming bright
Drops at my feet from some swift pinion shed.

So have I stood and watched the thoughts sweep by
Of some victorious soul who loves the heights
I strive in vain to wing with wayward flights
That veer with every wind beneath the sky ;
And some white thought that fluttered from above
I 've treasured in my breast, and learned to love.

Wisconsin.

To MONTAIGNE.

FILLED with the lingering zest of holiday
Are the red-blooded grapes of famed Bordeaux,
Round treasuries of sunshine afterglow
To warm man's winter heart to human play.
Amid the laden slopes persists the lay
The waters of the Dordogne murmur low
As these wind past the old round-towered chateau
Where brooding on the world you used to stray.

You have bequeathed to us eternal wine,
The mellowed vintage of benignant thought,
A drink with wistful understanding fraught,
A frequent solace, and a draught benign :
The cup is deep wherein we drink you peace,
There where your questioning soul has found release.

ON READING ONE OF OSCAR WILDE'S
PLAYS IN HIS ROOMS.

(ADDISON SOCIETY).

THESE walls are tongued with voices that survive
Above the blatant folly of the years :
These be the answers to the coward jeers
Of unforgiving men who will not shrive
A heart with other guilt than theirs ; who drive
A wounded soul across a waste of fears ;
Who do not know the bitterness of tears,
Or feel a faltering hope scarce kept alive.

Up ancient stairs we hasten from the night,
Above the murmuring of the Cherwell's flow,
Into these chambers of the long ago
Where flickers on the hearth the red fire-light.
Unfallen, stainless, here he speaks again
Nor knows to-morrow will be black with pain.

THE QUARRY.

' THIS one has sinned before his fellow-men ;
Then stone him quickly till he be no more !
What if his days were spent with toilsome pen
To banish error from his natural shore ?
What if he strove against some giant ill,
Unseen ? He fell : then stone him till ye kill ! '

Dust of the lower world, Oh ! bitter hearts,
Ye, who houndlike pursue another's fault
Across the solitudes and barren parts
Of sterile years of pain ; who only halt
To rend with reeking fangs the quivering prey
That fell before you on your hellish way !

THE CONQUEST.

OUR powers unspent must fill no hollow grave,
But find entombment in the living mass,
More bright than legends set in flaming brass,
A consolation for the nameless brave.
We have not risen from the womb to save
A dower sequestered in some dark restraint.
Oh comrades, let us put an end to faint
And faltering desire that holds us slave.

What though we fail? If we have chosen strife
And clenched our hands anew in iron toil
That knows no yielding to the fateful knife
Forever bared and seeking to despoil:
If we have fought unto the sinking sun
And fighting, died; then have we nobly won.

ETERNAL MYSTERIES.

IN solitude the moon ascends the sky,
Leans o'er the spacious night, bright-orbed and hoar
With undimmed guardianship of sea and shore
And ancient gazing on tranquillity.
Beneath that watch the vales full-brooded lie
With sons of men, the prey of pain, grown sore
With needless travailings, who evermore
Produce their kind, to love and fear and die.

Yet ever might we feel the magic touch,
The high serenity of changeless force :
Why need we steer so faltering a course,
Why do we shrink away and vaguely clutch
At our own feeble structures, whilst the call
Unheeded goes of spheres harmonical?

THE DREAMER.

HERE on this height embowered above the sea
Glitters the warm, untroubled afternoon :
I lie content, half in a golden swoon
And think and dream of nought that is, but thee.

If I may wake to find thee mine forsooth,
I will arise in haste and towards thee fly ;
But if that may not be, Oh let me lie
And dream the dreams of an eternal youth.

Then do not wake me to an empty day,
An idle world that hastens to and fro.
Unwilling have I come ; now let me go :
Nought is there here but dreams to make me stay.

MONTMARTRE.

HER brow bound round by a band of green
She leaned from the casement old :
The tiles in the roof were bent and lean
And flecked with an emerald mould.

The sky was dim above her head ;
The night was rich with sound ;
The rose at her side was twilight red,
And the world lay far around.

The Angelus has faded slow,
But rest blooms on the hill :
She journeys through the long ago .
Through streets that ne'er are still.

She smiles to think these heights are won
That rise above the plain :
She smiles to know she need not tread
Those glimmering streets again.

She leans against the purple night,
And knows no new desire.
Her brow is lit with mystic light,
Her lips are sealed with fire.

THE TUILERIES.

AUTUMNAL leaves are blown across thy ways,
And in thy gardens fair, that fragrant smile :
Among thy trees the ancient minstrel plays
And sways in melancholy dance the while
 The leaves that loitering lie
 In rest before they fly.

In truth, this were a realm of liberty
Sweet in the sun and warm and tender bright :
Not France, red-lipped, and wan with leprosy,
Who, wandering ever in the treacherous night
 With vagrant, vulture ken,
 Feeds on the souls of men.

MAISON LAVENUE.

I.

MOODS.

WITHOUT, the rain beats ceaseless on the stones :
 The world lies huddled underneath the night :
 Within this spot of light that routs the gloom
 We sit together, and our elbows touch.
 Forgathered from the boundaries of the earth,
 Two score or more, we fleet the circling hours
 And wear our masks of cheer that none may see
 What leers beneath them at this house of clay.
 We drain the cup and hearken to the lute ;
 Sore troubled by an universal woe
 We cannot speak, we hardly dare to feel,
 We throw our mantles back and laugh aloud.

Aye, but the oil within the lamps must wane,
 The candles fade and gutter in their place.
 Then must we all, alone, uncomraded,
 Go out into the darkness of the night
 Where no lute plays and no friend sits beside.

To-morrow's skull-and-bones, we idly sit
 And dream. Lo, on the nonce the years are fled ;
 Part of the awful night we knew and shunned
 Falls on us as we linger at the board.

II.

THE ORCHESTRA.

FROM divers borders of broad lands we come
And speak in various tongues unknown and strange,
Devised in every age by striving wit,
Words of a dull and blind inconsequence.
But you speak with a multifarious voice
One common tongue, the language of the soul :
And as we gather from the spacious night,
Wistful to bridge the precipice that yawns
Around our lives, eager to warm our hearts
At some bright universal hearth, you sing
For us the songs of wordless recompense.
We travel with you o'er forgotten years
Whence we have come, and journey o'er the hills
That rise mist-laden on to-morrow's dawn.

Paris.

BOULEVARD ST. MICHEL.

I WALK among the dead and hear the night
Sigh mournfully across the world for these,
Her sons and daughters, who have drunk the lees
And left the wine, and died. With faces white,
With lips blood-red and tense, in ghostly flight
They silent glide beneath the spectral trees
That shed cold raindrops as a waning breeze
Blows through their branches in the sombre light.

Before my eyes the world and all that's fair
And pure and full of sweet felicity
Reel in a maze of horror and despair;
For in that swoon of ill I only see
Red lips upturned unto the kiss of doom,
White arms that vainly strive to part the gloom.

EN ROUTE.

‘It’s growing late,’
The painted-one sighed to her mate,
And stepped into the night
From out the music and the light.

‘It’s growing late,’
She murmured, pale, disconsolate.
As wearily she treads the street
With hollow eye she must repeat
‘It’s growing late.’

LIFE'S SOLACE.

I JOURNEYED on my way across the world,
Past altared hills and forests strangely lone,
By dim parterres of ancient sculptured stone
Where mists autumnal languidly uncurled ;
Under the night rich-gemmed with secret fire,
By flood-tides of the unremitting sea
Full of the murmur of infinity ;
Through cities walled, gay with the dance and lyre.
Lo, as I passed along with eager eye
A gate stood open and I entered there
From out the tumult of the thoroughfare,
And breathed a new perfume all wonderingly.
There lay the noble garden of your mind
Bright with a bloom bequeathed from the sun
Your contemplative days had early won,
With wondrous courts and curving paths designed.
I lingered there and felt divine release
From breathless days of desperate pursuit :
Then turned again upon the highways, mute.
Rememberingly I journey on, in peace.

THE SKULL.

BEFORE me rests a mouldering skull ;
Rude sockets deep within the bone :
Discoloured walls, uncouth and dull
Dissolve to clay, like shapeless stone.

No name, no rank, no monstrous care
Invades the unresponsive shell :
What matter who be grim or fair ?
Prove me an earth, a heaven, a hell !

Within this fragment, clean bereft
Of that which fashions one from all,
Nought of the truant past is left
To urge a faint memorial.

* * * * *

Mayhap some deed that ne'er can die
Found birth within this transient dome ;
Some gleaming thought, in harmony
With laws unchanging, here had home.

Perchance a conquering joy had birth
And grew to bless a favoured race,
Within this tenement of earth, .
A frail and brief abiding-place.

Then drifts no saddening dust away :
Regrets want burial more than bone :
Gloom has no harbour in this clay !
The raven of despair has flown !

MR. AND MRS. BETTERTON.

OPHELIA floats upon the stage,
Misunderstanding's heritage,
The saddest blossom Fate has torn
To wither and to die forlorn.

Still brooding in uncertainty,
With bended head and hidden eye
Stands yonder heir of Denmark's reign,
For Hamlet must be all disdain.

No foolish flowers of May for him !
His heart is filled with questions grim :
But Betterton knows otherwise
Whilst tears of love o'erflow his eyes.

A SONG OF YOUTH.

GIVE a hand to me, my dear,
And give a hand to Spring :
We 'll sing a measure full and clear
And dance all in a ring.

My heart is yours, and yours is mine,
And Spring laughs at our folly :
Our health is meat, our joy is wine,
Our foe is melancholy.

We 'll sing as blithe and sing as clear
As children of the trees :
Our only notes are those of cheer ;
Sing love, and vie with these !

A WANDERER'S SONG.

THERE is no recompense that pays
For absence from thy side :
No time to barter for the days
I 've spent across the tide.

I left thee for a little while
To seek another shore,
But ere I 'd gone a weary mile
I wished my quest were o'er.

Would thou had'st gone away from me
And I been left behind !
Then might I follow after thee,
And seeking soon would find.

MY HEARTH.

THE winter wind bites not so keen
 Nor storms assault my wearied frame
 As when far hence from thee I 've been,
 Away from thine encircling flame.

But when far lands are left behind,
 My wayworn feet that falter not
 In near approach to thee will find
 A kindlier and a happier lot.

Then grim old Winter proves a friend,
 For in his rage I feel no sting :
 Before thine eyes I fondly bend :
 They are my hearth, my comforting.

A GAME.

I MET a careless boy, who drove
 With clatter and clang his iron ring,
And my tired ears grew deaf thereby
 To every other hearkening.

And many gray-haired men I meet
 Driving o'er noisy ways of sin
The bruised circle of the years,
 Until their lives are lost in din.

THE OPTIMIST.

THE lawn inlaid with golden glee
 Smiles at me as I pass :
 I feel a greeting meant for me
 In the nodding of the grass.

Yon fluttering children of the air
 Pipe messages of cheer,
 Content, with this their only care,
 That I may gladly hear.

The trees bend with caressing arms
 To shield my path from ill :
 The springs gush with persistent charms
 That I may have my fill.

And so I wander up and down
 A land of ecstasy,
 For well I know, in field or town,
 The world was made for me.

DE AMICITIA.

PUNCTILIOUS was my life before :
 You made it pure and free.
You turned dull Duty from the door
 And let in Liberty.

You did not bind me with the chain
 Of galling gratitude :
Nor did you tell me life were vain
 Without high aims imbued.

Until you came I could not show
 Devotion full and sweet :
Until you left I did not know
 One sorrow real and deep.

SIC TRANSIT.

SHE dallied with a fading flower ;
She whispered ' None but you has power
To make me wish to live.'

He looked into her languid eye ;
He said, ' I would not have you die,
Yet have I nought to give.

My heart has withered and grown old,
My summer has turned bitter cold ;
The rose blooms there no more.'

He took her hand with tender care,
He kissed her on her forehead fair,
As he had dreamed before.

Full silently she looked him through ;
She saw that all his words were true ;
She trembled at the sight.

He stooped and took the faded flower
That there had spent its dying hour,
And passed into the night.

A SONG OF THE WEST.

THE voice of the West is loud in my ear
Singing of freedom and love and life,
Clear as the voice of her mountaineer
As he sings to his axe at his woodland strife.

Out on the plains no sneer can live;
The puny soul must shrivel and die :
Out on the prairie you learn to give,
And your measure is spaced by earth and sky.

In the face of the hills can you treasure your pride?
Prate to the wind of birth or name?
There you must do ; and there you must hide
What hinders the doing : all else is shame.

No law of custom 'twixt man and man
That binds the lips as the two pass by,
Can live in the open or face the ban
Of river and peak and unspanned sky.

Under the thousand-eyed night of the plains
The soul grows big and the heart beats high,
And life is cleansed of its ancient stains,
And man forgets to fear to die.

Minneapolis.

PLAGUE-STRICKEN.

THE dead soul walks with empty grin
 Nor knows the horror of his mien :
 His only cognizance of sin
 In others' error all has been.

No mandate from the tabled stone
 Has suffered at his clammy hand :
 And yet the bird of ill has flown
 Incessant at his foul command.

His robes are white as leprosy,
 His conscience deadened with a draught
 From that dark well, Hypocrisy,
 Which all the lost have deeply quaffed.

The murky air of night is dyed
 With memories and deeds ill-done :
 But oh, the darkness of noontide
 When phantoms stalk beneath the sun !

THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

I LOVED ! And then my heart grew cold.
Ah God ! help me to love again :
The best of me is weak and old,
And all that is seems frail and vain.

The day is dull with hopes burnt out ;
The best has died, take thou the rest
Unless thou kindle once again
The fire within the vacant breast.

I saw a bell swing to the night,
Its clapper lost, and all was mute :
And as I looked I wept ; that sight
Was for a soul more resolute.

To love, and then to love no more ;
Is there a curse so cold or dread ?
What crime was mine that fate so sore
Fell freezing on my guiltless head ?

THE QUEST.

THE eye of day is lidded,
And in silence of the night
I feel thy touch, my brother,
And all the dark is light.

In the mart where men assemble
Have I waited for thee long ;
I have listened for thee, eager,
In the wild-bird's haunting song.

And when my heart was bitter
And full of grim dismay,
I found thee watchful, waiting ;
And how I blessed the day !

Upon the thoroughfare
We've passed as in a dream ;
But never more unwitting
Of the new-discovered gleam.

EXPATRIATION.

SCORN not the seeker after home and peace
Who leaves his land and kindred far behind,
Retreating to an old inheritance
Whence long ago his fathers turned their sail;
Nor point a mournful finger at his flight
To some dim haven o'er the chiding sea.
Else dost thou violate the welcome given
To those unnumbered peasantry who till,
(With dreamful eyes of otherwhere), thy fields,
And grow incorporate in thy thriving state.
As well urge these to native constancy,
As well point a premonitory hand
Across the waters they have hopeful braved.
Our little world, where we are graceless guests,
Is whole, nor can those petty minds who hedge
And sever in their unrequited greed,
Unseal the adamant of unity :
They strive to part the seamless garment, torn
In covetous endeavour, and they gauge
By immemorial theft, prerogative.
Embrace a larger law than legislates

Among a blinded faction. Look thou back
Nor judge unrighteously thy stern forbears
Who left their storied land behind and sought
Another habitation here. They broke
The nearest ties of countless Fellowships
And sped away to sing their hymns austere,
To thunder wrath e'en to the peaceful Friend
Whom, unconforming, they turned out with zeal.
With such traditions on your history's page,
Can you urge boundaries for a modern age?

ON OCCUPYING A STRANGER'S ROOMS IN
THE LONG VACATION.

FAR off he strays, I know not where nor how :
Mayhap on some proud Alp he gropes his way
Or lies at languid ease where breakers play
And frames some idle legend round the prow
That cuts the salty wave ; or hand on plough
Turns umlaut-farmer on his holiday,
Disdaining errant wits and transient lay
With frozen lips and deeply furrowed brow.

And while he errs I mount the vacant throne
Beside the flameless altar, and at hand
I find a marshalled row of friends who stand
To welcome me and flout the thought ' Alone ! '
I know thee, though our hands may never touch ;
These constant mates of thine have told me much.

Oxford.

ON A CLANDESTINE INSCRIPTION IN
ANOTHER'S BOOK.

TO THE VICTIM.

AN idle moment at your finger's end?

Then turn your vagrant fancies to yon shelf
Where many sages with their treasured pelf
Outwit old Father Time, their envious friend.

Take down the volume mystic Shakespeare writ,
That jewel-box of sorrow and of joy,
Where golden sonnets mixed with faint alloy
Prove everlastingly his gleaming wit.

Perchance into that magic casket fair

Some common stone hath found a dusty way :
Read what the sullied fly-leaves rudely say,
Nor scorn in haste the empty bauble there.

TO MY SISTER.

THE world without lies gray and dumb
But the world within is full of cheer,
For the lord of her secret heart is come
And the secret light in her soul shines clear.

What if the earth lie bare and gray
And the wind without blow shrill and keen?
Fair summer glows, dear, every day
In eyes where Love is thronèd Queen.

THE WORSHIPPER.

THE altar-fire is out : harsh cinders strew
The steps where sacrilegious feet have trod
A measure hateful to the sweet-eyed god
Who from such revelry in haste withdrew.
And watching from afar the ghastly crew,
One silent worshipper, who long had bent
A reverential head in testament
Of faith, turned home and wept the long night through.

APART.

BECAUSE he felt no message for the world,
But only sang because he needed song
To reassure him that his soul was strong
Against the tumult of strange doubts that swirled
Relentless round his heart :

Because he loathed their store of smothering rime,
Their adulation and their silken phrase,
He left them to that interchange of praise :
They called him dumb and blighted ere his time
And from him drew apart.

Alone he sought the naked cliff and there
Sang musingly unto the throbbing deep ;
With troubled eyes looked at the face of sleep
And grew untroubled at the calmness fair
That lingered in that smile.

And brooding in that place he lost the fear
From his remonstrant breast. He learned to know
The voice of ages sighing far below,
A song uncognizant of time or ear,
And void of good or guile.

IN MEMORIAM P. B. S.

CLEAR from the uplands coming down, I hear
A voice of gladness and untroubled hope ;
Thy voice, bright Ranger, full of ageless cheer,
Borne on the wind down the eternal slope.

IN MEMORIAM P. B. S.

SPIRIT of fire : knight-errant of the soul,
Befriend my listening ear : teach me to scorn
Folly of grief that blights or kills, and dole
Of eyes tear-blinded to the mystic morn
Where thy irradiant mind speeds on her flights.
Oh give me of thy comradeship again
That I may mount and sing upon the heights
Seeing Death dead, and only Life remain.

I.

Eternal friend to all aspiring youth,
Born in a storm-torn age to break Wrong's reign !
Impatient seeker of the hidden truth,
We mourn not thee, but those who call thee slain.
The wings of morning never droop nor tire,
Nor light grow weary of her crystal task :
The cloud that so obscures man's high desire
Is his own making, and a needless mask.

II.

While yet the turbid smoke from shattered fanes
O'erwhelmed the fallen and the frenzied band,
And broken shrieks of Europe in despair
Were hurtled through the dark, enshrouded land,
Thou cam'st to hear, and shudder at the doom,
To lift on high a torch of flickering light,
To stretch an eager hand into the gloom,
To raise the fallen and to bless the right.

III.

A later Icaros on longings fed,
Too near the scorching sun thy wing hath gone
In ecstasy of flight : not upward led
By pride of power, by fluttering glory drawn,
Like that artificer of olden days,
But bent on messages for human cheer,
Intent to work deliverance, scorning praise,
Valiant and undisguised foe to Fear.

IV.

Upon the altars of thy thought flamed bright
The Vestal fires of Truth: thy God was kind,
Not made with hands; nor worshippèd aright
Except in deeds and longings unconfined
By barriers man-fashioned, absolute;
Through all thy days the heart's clear rhapsody
In gladness prayed and not one hour was mute:
And on thy lips a constant melody.

V.

The, sacred Mother, whose endless breath is life,
Deep into thee had poured her Delphian lore;
The sea, who wages stern, unceasing strife
With his firm brother, the enduring shore,
Had sung for thee the mystic song of Peace;
And in that throbbing chant was heard a voice
Of promise and a hinting of release
From unintelligible circumstance.

VI.

Not wanton chance that turned thy fragile bark
And poured her treasure in the labouring sea :
For Nature upon thee had set her mark,
The winds and waves had taught their minstrelsy :
And thou hadst sung their songs and breathed their
fame
Till they grew raptured of the wondrous lay
Sung by so sweet a voice : then they laid claim
Upon this child earth borrowed for a day.

VII.

The curlèd waves embraced and held thee near
Unto the wondrous bridal eyes of Death.
Thou look'st : nor ever turn'dst away in fear.
And at thy ear in low refrain the breath
Of Adonäis, sweet as some faint scent
From gardens dim ; a welcoming into rest.
And lo ! the veil of mystery was rent,
The load of evil days sank from thy breast.

VIII.

On blue Lerici's rock-encircling shore
Comrade and ship-boy found their haven too,
From wearying seas and vain tempestuous roar
Their passage over and their labours through.
High on the coast the loved ones trembling stand
With wild eyes bent upon the flying foam,
Wandering in anxious grief upon the sand,
Waiting in vain to speak the welcome home.

IX.

At that glad leap into the wide sea's arms,
Into the bosom of Futurity,
Life yielded up her undismantled charms;
And one who sang of mutability
Pursued the mystery of his frequent theme:
And softly smiled to find the key he sought
Unto the door, whose opening, as a dream
Had haunted all the hours wherein he wrought.

X.

There where the pines their sombre vigil keep,
Uplifted on the curved Italian shore
Inlaid with tribute from the sounding deep,
With bright sea-flowers and pebbles scattered o'er,
They found this fairest shell of all the seas.
In monumental peace the sacred slope
Of Viareggio looked down : the breeze
Divinely hymned her requiem of hope.

XI.

Upon the clinging sands his feet had pressed
They built an altar of salt-crusted wood
Brought by the white-maned steeds who never rest,
And placed thereon with incense rare and good
This fragile chalice of their golden friend :
Enwrapt in this last winding-sheet of flame
All that was mortal passed ; eager to wend
Back to the glowing country whence it came.

XII.

Soft on the jewelled shore he loved, the sea
In rhythm sang its immemorial chant
Of reverence, a hoary melody,
Mysterious, low, and e'er recalcitrant;
Full of the distant murmurings of those
In shipwreck lost on alien seas afar;
Touched with the brooding calm that constant flows,
Wizard o'er storms, friend of the evening-star.

XIII.

Shelley, thy mortal clasp we cannot know,
But when the west wind blows across the fields
I feel a fragile hand upon my brow
And hear an unspent melody that yields
Surcease to fever-beats of false desire.
Then am I 'ware of answer from above
Inbreathed by the universal choir
In primal rhythm of harmonious Love.

XIV.

Herald of universal brotherhood
Rushing with morn upon the untrod peaks
In breathless quest of the eternal good,
Or down into the vale where Custom seeks
To blind and stain men's eyes with clinging mists
Of doubt and mildews of ignoble fears !
Thine ardent word unlanguishing persists
Above the ceaseless clamour of the years

XV.

What matter Time and Chance and slow Decay?
Of brazen Destiny each welded link?
He lived, he lives : the night comes and the day
And hours tumultuous hurry to the brink
And plunge into the fatal void below.
High o'er that boundlessness in victor flight
A haunting tone is heard, serenely low
As firmamental music of the night.

COMMODIOUS SEAS.

THE winds of dawn blow o'er the sea :
Across the far horizon-line
They urge the sails of memory,
Faint, dream-boat wings above the brine.

The keel has grated on the shore :
We disembark ; then turn to find
Her lured away for evermore
By incantations of the wind.

DELIVERANCE.

A FRAIL Andromeda, my soul was bound
Against a cliff of doubt, a wall of fear :
Before my tortured eyes lay all things drear ;
Endless in dull monotony profound.
Then emerald-eyed and scaled with death around
Came creeping through the slime-beclotted meer
A monstrous shape of ever-hungry leer :
Within that sight my naked hope was drowned.

Like Perseus then you came all valiantly
And slew the dragon and brake off my chains :
You warmed me with the ardour of your eye
Unto a love that less than love disdains,
Unto a faith assured it cannot die.
I give you all, and more than all remains.

NIGHT.

EMBROIDERED dimly with autumnal gold,
(Robbed by the breeze from yonder branches bright),
The languorous stream has drunk the pale moonlight
And now lies tranquil in her bed of mould.
Soft-footed winds with tongues like bells far-toll'd
Have danced along this bank in wanton flight :
Now they are gone, and clad in filmy white
Their furtive ghosts beguile the midnight cold.

I, too, would sleep, but some insistent call
Awakes the phantom tenants of my brain
And lures me to these shades Druidical :
The world is dead and I alone remain,
The mute survivor of an empty day
When all who were have gone their silent way.

MASKED.

WHEN thou wert gone I followed roving Chance :
Attentive to the ready tongues of men
I trod oblivious joyaunce in the dance
And sought to thwart regret with facile pen :
Devotion early vowed and lightly won
Beguiled the mocking hours from dawn till night,
Beguiled those hungry children of the sun
Who prey upon our lives with no respite.

And all the while the I, who shall survive
After the measurements of time are lost,
Stood wistful, patient in the flimsy gyve,
A shadow by a thousand shadows cross't :
Stood silent, waiting thy return from thence,
Knowing thy love's fulfilling recompense.

THE WISEMEN.

IN truth the Wisemen watched their flocks by night
Against the advent there of privy foe
And lest the scattered sheep should wandering go
Across the hills beyond their guardian sight.
With unremitting care and vision bright
They shepherded their restless charge below,
Nor failed, the while, to watch the flocks that glow
Above, in pastures blanched with soft moonlight.

We would be Wisemen here, and spend our powers
In husbandry of all that lies around
So rich in store of herds and fruit and flowers.
We would have wisdom, too, not of the ground,
To read the motions of the crowded sky,
That ever blazon immortality.

LIFE AND LOVE.

FROM out the absolute came Love and found
His sister Life all desolate and dumb,
Impatient, waiting there for Death to come
To bear her to his house beneath the ground.
Then Love began, 'Oh sister, be not bound
By fetters forged of conscious martyrdom!
They tie the heart to earth and keep it from
The upper door that leads where Good sits crowned.'

Life heard him speak; looked on his shining face
And knew a resurrection from her care:
Then hand in hand, with songs of liquid grace,
They trod the meadows by the silver sea,
Where slender lilies quiver in the air
And wandering waters croon a mystery.

SHADOWS.

At night my heart had been of cheer
With plans resolved :
' All will be well ' : then sleep drew near
And lured me with embraces dear
Till Thought dissolved.

I wake and feel a nameless dread,
A lingering care,
As if some corse were in my bed.
I stretch my arm to feel Hope dead
Beside me there.

While I have slept what fiend has found
An entrance here?
Why is my youth with fetters bound?
Why is my strength in horror drowned?
Whence cometh fear?

From out that grisly bed I leap
In grim dismay :
A couch I sought for rest and sleep,
Not for a charnel-house to keep
Me for a prey !

I breathe new life : the phantom fades
 Before the light.
Warm blood my frozen heart invades ;
I am as one escaped the shades
 Of outer night.

The morn is clear in yonder park :
 Beneath the trees
The deer nibble the lichened bark :
Uprising from the ground the lark
 Pours melodies.

Mellowed by sun, caressed by rain,
 Stands yonder Tower.
Had Wisdom e'er a fairer fane?
Not since the Grecian heights have lain
 In despot's power !

St. Swithin's,
Magdalen College.

AD MATREM.

THE silver rain upon the bough
Fell not more gently than her speech :
God never made a fairer brow
Nor eyes more tender to beseech
Clear guidance for our feet.

With girlhood still about her heart,
(Unwithered by the grief she bore),
She waited for the flowers to start,
Then smiling back passed through the door
Unto the golden street.

Here we grow old amid our fears,
And gray and bent and worn : but thou,
Child-mother, through the tragic years
Art frail and young, with girlish brow
And eyes most wondrous sweet.

STARS.

THE azure hive above is bright
With swarms of golden bees :
They glitter in the summer night
Above the plumèd trees.

Dear alchemists of light they sing
About their heavenly task :
They circle on with tireless wing
And no respite they ask.

They store their treasure in the skies
For those to taste who will :
Their songs are full of sweet surprise
For those whose lips are still.

To ALAN STEVENSON.

BRAVE be thy heart, ingenuous boy,
Inheritor of smiling eyes,
Of warm hand-clasp and comrade joy
And all the ardour of surprise !

Well wilt thou grace the noble task
Thy fathers held ; and fashion more
High towers whose streaming lights unmask
The granite treacheries of the shore.

He, too, who fled to southern seas,
(That valiant pilgrim of thy clan),
Would bless thee on his weakened knees
And say thine aim becomes a man.

TRAVELLER'S SONG.

TURN out the light and let us sit
Together side by side,
Here in the darkness, emberlit,
Like bridegroom with his bride.

To-morrow you go on your way
And I am off on mine :
Where we shall be the after day
No man can well divine.

But for to-night our road 's the same !
We fare together here !
We shall not take the path we came ;
But do not grieve, my dear !

There may be other cross-roads fair
Where haply we shall meet :
And Memory takes a wondrous care
Good fortune to repeat.

HOLYWELL PRESS, OXFORD.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ

This book is due on the last **DATE** stamped below.

To renew by phone, call **459-2756**

Books not returned or renewed within 14 days
after due date are subject to billing.

SEP 06 1995 REC'D

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ



3 2106 01185 0143

